

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MARCH 21, 2013

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2013–14 REGULAR SESSION

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 832

Introduced by Assembly Member Weber

February 21, 2013

An act to add Section 10072.2 to the Welfare and Institutions Code, relating to public social services.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 832, as amended, Weber. ~~CalFresh. Electronic benefits transfer cards: state college campuses.~~

Existing federal law provides for the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly the Food Stamp Program, under which nutrition assistance benefits, formerly referred to as food stamps, are allocated to each state by the federal government for the purchase of certain eligible foods at approved retail food stores. ~~Under existing state law, pursuant to CalFresh, California's federal allocation is distributed to eligible individuals by each county. Existing law authorizes a county to deliver CalFresh benefits through the use of an electronic benefits transfer (EBT) system and also prohibits recipients from purchasing certain items with their CalFresh benefits.~~

Existing law provides for the California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) program, under which each county provides cash assistance and other benefits to qualified low-income families.

Existing law permits a county to elect to deliver CalWORKs and SNAP benefits through the use of an electronic benefits transfer (EBT) system. Existing law specifies criteria for the development and

administration of the EBT system, including issuance to a recipient of an EBT card.

~~This bill would state the intent of the Legislature to enact legislation that would allow the use of a CalFresh electronic benefit transfer (EBT) card on a college or university campus for the purchase of food; require all convenience stores and bookstores on any campus of the University of California, the California State University, and the California Community Colleges to accept the use of electronic benefits transfer cards. The bill would also make related legislative findings and declarations.~~

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: ~~no~~-yes.
State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

1 SECTION 1. *The Legislature finds and declares all of the*
 2 *following:*
 3 (a) *Participation in the California Work Opportunity and*
 4 *Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) program and the federal*
 5 *Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), known in*
 6 *California as CalFresh, has increased in recent years. From July*
 7 *2007 through June 2012, CalWORKs enrollment increased by*
 8 *24.37 percent. From July 2007 through October 2012, CalFresh*
 9 *enrollment has more than doubled. As of February 2013, the*
 10 *CalFresh caseload includes 1.8 million households. College*
 11 *students enrolled in state colleges and universities are a group*
 12 *that benefits from both programs.*
 13 (b) *Benefits under both programs are accessible with the use*
 14 *of an electronic benefits transfer (EBT) card. EBT cards are*
 15 *accepted at point of service machines and ATMs at many retailers,*
 16 *including grocery stores, convenience stores, and gas stations.*
 17 *However, EBT cards are not currently accepted at convenience*
 18 *stores or bookstores on college and university campuses.*
 19 (c) *When student EBT card holders are denied accessibility on*
 20 *campus, they must either travel off campus to find another retailer*
 21 *or locate an ATM for cash where they are usually issued a*
 22 *surcharge for the transaction. The surcharge forces the goods to*
 23 *cost more and takes away benefits that could be used on other*
 24 *necessities. According to the Department of Social Services, the*
 25 *annual amount of surcharges and fees paid by CalWORKs*

1 recipients to withdraw basic need grants is approximately \$20
2 million. Allowing low-income students to use their EBT cards on
3 campus will allow them to save their benefits and time.

4 (d) CalFresh benefits on an EBT card may only be used for food
5 support. By allowing the students to use these benefits on campus,
6 students would be able to acquire healthy meals and snacks, which
7 may benefit their well-being and have a positive effect on their
8 grades since their bodies and brains would be nourished.

9 (e) State college and university campus participation in the EBT
10 system will benefit those institutions by allowing them to acquire
11 a new form of revenue to assist with their budget and will not be
12 a cost to them since retailers may obtain free state-provided EBT
13 equipment. It would also eliminate discrimination at campuses
14 against low-income students who have previously been denied
15 access to their benefits because of the way the benefits are
16 distributed.

17 (f) California state colleges and universities are comprised of
18 a diverse class of students who utilize various methods to cover
19 financial obligations on campus. It is vital to require the state's
20 public higher education institutions to accept the use of EBT cards
21 on their campuses to allow students to purchase food at campus
22 convenience stores and other necessary items for their well-being
23 at campus bookstores.

24 SEC. 2. Section 10072.2 is added to the Welfare and Institutions
25 Code, to read:

26 10072.2. All convenience stores and bookstores located on any
27 campus of the University of California, the California State
28 University, and the California Community Colleges shall accept
29 the use of electronic benefits transfer cards.

30 ~~SECTION 1. It is the intent of the Legislature to enact~~
31 ~~legislation that would allow the use of a CalFresh electronic benefit~~
32 ~~transfer (EBT) card on a college or university campus for the~~
33 ~~purchase of food.~~